

CITY OF BELLEVUE
CITY COUNCIL

Summary Minutes of Extended Study Session

January 8, 2001
6:00 p.m.

Council Conference Room
Bellevue, Washington

PRESENT: Mayor Mosher, Deputy Mayor Marshall, Councilmembers Creighton, Degginger, Lee, and Noble

ABSENT: None

1. Executive Session

Deputy Mayor Marshall opened the meeting at 6:02 p.m. and announced recess to executive session for approximately 90 minutes to discuss two items of pending litigation. The meeting resumed at 7:35 p.m. with Mayor Mosher presiding.

Mayor Mosher announced that King County has certified the West Lake Sammamish annexation petitions. He noted the addition of agenda item 3(e), Appointment of Environmental Services Commission member to fill vacancy.

2. Oral Communications: None.

3. Study Session

(a) Council New Initiatives

Mr. Creighton requested future Council discussion about the City's noise ordinance. He is concerned that activities such as pile driving on weekends do not appear to be covered by the ordinance.

(b) Consideration of "Friendship City" Application from Tong Xiang, China

City Manager Steve Sarkozy described the application by K.C. Yee of AmeriTek, Inc. on behalf of the City of Tong Xiang, China, to become a "Friendship City" with the City of Bellevue.

Judy Louisell, Sister Cities Program Administrator, said Tong Xiang has a population of 653,000 and covers approximately 280 square miles. The city is located 100 miles from the Shanghai

International Airport on the delta of the Yangtze River near the China Sea. Tong Xiang is part of the Economic Development Zone along the coastline of China. Industries include textiles, leather, plastics, building materials, machinery hardware, chemicals, and electronics.

Ms. Louisell said Bellevue Resolution No. 6384, approved in December 1999, allows for more than four sister cities, outlines a two-year Friendship City period before becoming a Sister City, and allows for the independent review of applications by the City Council. Current Sister Cities are Yao, Japan (1969); Hualien, Taiwan (1984); Liepaja, Latvia (1992); and Kladno, Czech Republic (1993). Ms. Louisell said the Bellevue Sister Cities Association supports the application of Tong Xiang.

Ms. Louisell reviewed the fiscal impacts of establishing a new Friendship City: 1) shift of personnel within the City Manager's Office programs, 2) slight increase in maintenance and operations costs, and 3) travel and training expenses for an exploratory trip in 2001.

K.C. Yee, MD, PhD, President of AmeriTek, Inc., said he has worked on this proposal for one and a half years. He briefly described Tong Xiang and requested Council's approval of the application. Vilis Barevics, President of Bellevue Sister Cities Association, said the BSCA voted to recommend approval of Dr. Yee's application.

Mr. Sarkozy explained that Resolution No. 6384 delegates to the City Manager the role and responsibility of making a recommendation to Council regarding Sister City applications. He said the selection criteria contained in section 2 of the resolution are general in nature, which makes it difficult to make a recommendation regarding this application.

Councilmember Lee described the development of Resolution No. 6384 and the deliberate intention to maintain flexibility in the Sister Cities Program. He said the purpose of the temporary Friendship City status is to provide both cities with the opportunity to determine whether a long-term Sister City commitment is desired. Mr. Lee supports approval of the application. He noted that the associated financial responsibilities for the City are minimal.

Mayor Mosher questioned the amount of local support for this application. He encouraged Council to consider the number and type of cities desired for Sister City relationships. He suggested a review of the selection criteria.

Mr. Noble noted the lack of similarity between Bellevue and Tong Xiang in terms of population and other characteristics. He suggested a review of the Sister Cities Program as a whole to refine Bellevue's objectives for the program.

Mr. Degginger said he is not convinced that the application meets the selection criteria contained in Resolution No. 6384. Noting that Bellevue currently has two Sister Cities in Asia, he suggested that Council seek a geographic balance in adding future Sister Cities.

Mrs. Marshall commented on the need for more specific guidelines and selection criteria. As an example, she said the concept of "geographic similarity/balance" can be interpreted a number of

ways including size, surrounding natural environment, and the location of prospective Sister Cities in relationship to Bellevue and/or existing Sister Cities.

Mr. Creighton feels Bellevue should proactively seek Sister City relationships based on specific objectives. He noted that Tong Xiang is much larger than Bellevue. He said many people who signed the petition in support of the application live in Seattle, which is closer in size to Tong Xiang. Mr. Creighton observed that the Sister Cities Program is intended to promote people-to-people exchanges, while the Tong Xiang application reflects more of an economic exchange.

Mayor Mosher restated Council's interest in reviewing and refining the Sister Cities policy and selection criteria. Mr. Noble favors a broader geographic distribution of Sister Cities. Mr. Lee suggested accepting the application for Friendship City status in order to give both cities more time to make a decision regarding Sister City status. Mr. Degginger is concerned about the prospect of modifying the selection criteria and then requiring Tong Xiang's application to be considered under the new criteria.

Dorothy Webb, past President of BSCA, feels the Tong Xiang application meets the current selection criteria.

(c) I-405 Corridor Study Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) Alternatives

Mr. Sarkozy opened the discussion regarding I-405 Corridor Study Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) alternatives. Transportation Director Goran Sparrman introduced Mike Cummings, Project Manager for the I-405 Corridor Study. Mr. Cummings is employed by the Office of Urban Mobility, Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), which is the lead agency for the project.

Kim Becklund, Regional Policy Manager, said the I-405 Corridor Study was initiated about a year ago and involves an Executive Committee of elected officials, a Steering Committee of staff, and a Citizens Committee. The EIS is scheduled for completion in fall 2001. Bellevue is requesting an additional \$12 million from the state legislature for the next two years.

Bernard van de Kamp, Regional Projects Manager, reviewed upcoming transportation projects in downtown Bellevue including the Access Downtown project and improvements to the Bellevue Transit Center. Bellevue is beginning to update its Downtown Implementation Plan, which includes a review of transportation needs. Mr. van de Kamp said the I-405 Corridor Study is looking at north-south routes for high-capacity transit. The Trans Lake Washington Study Committee is working to develop improvements for SR 520. Ridership for high-capacity transit is estimated at 35,000 to 45,000 daily riders between Bellevue and Seattle in 2020.

Mr. van de Kamp discussed high-capacity transit routing options. He noted the challenge to balance speed, reliability, and access. Potential north-south routes include the existing I-405 corridor, the Burlington Northern Railroad right-of-way, and local streets such as Bellevue Way or 112th Avenue. Potential east-west routes include SR 520, I-90, and a new lake crossing between downtown Bellevue and downtown Seattle. Mr. van de Kamp said bus rapid transit and light rail are proven high-capacity transit alternatives. Additional alternatives are being

evaluated as well. Light rail would provide highly reliable service on a fixed corridor, while bus rapid transit provides greater flexibility and service adaptability. Light rail would be compatible with the Sound Transit light rail system, while bus rapid transit and other technologies would require transfers.

Deputy Mayor Marshall noted that transfers will also be required for light rail, particularly for longer trips across the metropolitan area. Mr. Sparrman agreed. Mayor Mosher observed that placing transit on the Burlington Northern right-of-way would bypass downtown. Mr. Sparrman responded that location-specific design issues are not part of the analysis at this stage.

In response to Mr. Noble, Mr. van de Kamp said Sound Transit is currently reviewing high-capacity transit technologies. In response to Mr. Lee, Mr. van de Kamp said Bellevue is involved in this review. He said a kickoff meeting was held in late November and a second meeting is scheduled this month. Mr. Creighton feels elevated and grade-separated options should be considered rather than underground alternatives that are much more expensive. Mr. Sparrman commented that the preferred alternative could involve a combination of above-grade, street level, and below-grade segments.

Mr. Cummings briefly reviewed the process to identify a preferred alternative for the I-405 Corridor Study by the end of January. The Steering Committee and Citizens Committee have meetings scheduled for January 18. Recommendations from these committees will go to the Executive Committee, which will meet on January 25.

Mr. Cummings summarized the four alternatives under consideration. The first alternative represents an emphasis on transportation demand management (TDM) activities and high-capacity transit, with minor general capacity improvements. Alternative 2 focuses on high-capacity transit and adds one general purpose lane in each direction. Alternative 3 includes a bus rapid transit system on I-405 and two additional general purpose lanes in each direction. Alternative 4 reflects an expansion of the existing transit system, one additional general purpose lane in each direction, and a barrier-separated expressway with two lanes in each direction.

Mr. Cummings said TDM measures include the addition of 1,700 vanpools to the corridor, funding for public education and employer-based programs, transit-oriented development, and pedestrian-oriented development. He noted that Alternative 1 includes a pricing component to encourage the reduction of single-occupancy vehicle (SOV) travel on the corridor.

Mr. Cummings reviewed the high-capacity transit options under consideration for the I-405 corridor: 1) light rail, 2) skip stop (allows passenger to request that a stop be skipped in order to expedite the trip), 3) commuter rail, and 4) bus rapid transit. Alternatives 1, 2, and 3 add approximately 2.8 million hours of transit service on the corridor. Mr. Cummings said Metro's county-wide transit system currently provides a total of 3.3 million hours of service. He displayed a preliminary route system for the Eastside that was developed for the purpose of analysis.

Turning to freeway and roadway components, Mr. Cummings discussed the project's approach to minimizing impacts on neighborhoods. He described it as a middle-of-the-road approach and

noted that project costs vary depending on the design selected. Mr. Cummings briefly reviewed the analytical results for each alternative, including each alternative's effect on highway and local arterial traffic volumes and travel patterns. As more general purpose capacity is added, freeway traffic congestion decreases below current levels.

Mr. Cummings noted that all of the alternatives have environmental impacts. The I-405 corridor crosses approximately 60 streams containing Chinook salmon, which is a dominant issue for the project team. He reviewed the estimated costs of the alternatives:

Alternative 1 - \$.5 billion
Alternative 2 - \$ 8.7 billion
Alternative 3 - \$ 7 billion
Alternative 4 - \$12 billion

In response to Mr. Creighton, Mr. Cummings said the I-405 alternatives include improvements at the Highway 167 interchange and the north and south interchanges with I-5.

Mr. Sparrman said staff recommends approval of Alternative 3. However, he noted the need to address local operational issues associated with the movement of large volumes of traffic into and out of downtown Bellevue. Mr. Sparrman commented on the need to continue to provide adequate high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lane access for carpools and vanpools. He does not want to lose this HOV capacity in order to provide bus rapid transit. He emphasized the importance of accommodating both transportation modes. Mr. Sparrman said key factors supporting staff's recommendation are cost, benefit to Bellevue's arterial system, and the fact that Alternative 3 is less likely to attract traffic from the west side of Lake Washington than other alternatives.

Mr. Creighton questioned whether improvements to I-405 will alleviate traffic congestion that currently occurs at the interchanges of SR 520 and I-90. Mr. Sparrman said these traffic bottlenecks will be addressed in the design phase of the project. He said approximately half of the trips on I-405 have an origin or destination in downtown Bellevue.

In response to Mr. Lee, Mr. Cummings said conceptual design estimates have been developed for interchanges and arterial components. He said the estimates are conservative and include anticipated environmental mitigation costs.

Mrs. Marshall supports Alternative 3 as a Preliminary Preferred Alternative. She feels it is consistent with the Council's interest statement and provides a desired multi-modal approach. She noted that the I-405 Steering Committee is scheduled to select a Preliminary Preferred Alternative this month. However, all jurisdictions participating in the I-405 Corridor Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will be given the opportunity to select a Formal Preferred Alternative in March following completion of the Draft EIS. Mrs. Marshall encouraged the analysis of a variety of technologies, including bus rapid transit, before making a decision on the preferred high-capacity transit mode.

In response to Mr. Degginger, Mr. Cummings said the addition of two general-purpose lanes would add 24 feet to each side of I-405. However, another alternative is to add lanes above grade, particularly on the portion of I-405 that goes through Bellevue and in other areas that are geographically constrained.

- ➡ Mrs. Marshall moved that Council select Alternative 3 as the Preliminary Preferred Alternative for the I-405 Corridor Study, and Mr. Noble seconded the motion.
- ➡ The motion to select Alternative 3 as the Preliminary Preferred Alternative for the I-405 Corridor Study carried by a vote of 6-0.

Deputy Mayor Marshall noted staff's revisions to the Proposed Rail/Rapid Transit Interest Statement (Page 3-29) and requested a review of the statement with Council in the near future.

(d) Appointment of Councilmember to fill vacancy

Mayor Mosher opened the discussion to appoint a Councilmember to fill the vacant position left by Ron Smith's resignation. Mr. Creighton discussed two possible approaches: 1) identify candidates through an open application process, or 2) Council select a person with relevant experience to serve as interim Councilmember. In the past, Council selected a former Councilmember who was not allowed to run for the position in the next election.

Mr. Noble spoke in favor of selecting a recent Councilmember for the vacant position with the restriction that the person not be allowed to run for office in the next election. Mr. Lee concurred and said he would like to choose someone with appropriate experience and knowledge of Council issues to enable them to be effective in making decisions.

In the interest of being fair and consistent with previous Council practice, Mrs. Marshall recommended the selection of a recent Councilmember. Mr. Degginger and Mayor Mosher agreed with this approach.

- ➡ Mr. Lee moved to appoint Don Davidson to fill the unexpired term of former Councilmember Ron Smith, and Mr. Creighton seconded the motion.

Mr. Creighton suggested another recent Councilmember, Margot Blacker, as a potential candidate for the position. However, he noted that Dr. Davidson served on the Council more recently than Mrs. Blacker. Mr. Noble said Mrs. Blacker and Dr. Davidson are both excellent candidates.

- ➡ The motion to appoint Don Davidson to fill the unexpired term of former Councilmember Ron Smith carried by a vote of 6-0.

(e) Appointment of Environmental Services Commission member to fill vacancy

Mr. Mosher requested Council action to appoint Steve Szablya to fill a vacant position on the Environmental Services Commission.

- ➡ Mr. Lee moved to appoint Steve Szablya to fill the unexpired term of former Environmental Services Commission member Denny Braun, and Mrs. Marshall seconded the motion.
- ➡ The motion to appoint Steve Szablya to fill the unexpired term of former Environmental Services Commission member Denny Braun carried by a vote of 6-0.

At 9:55 p.m., Mayor Mosher declared the meeting adjourned.

Myrna L. Basich
City Clerk

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